The Operational Environment Through 2030

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Problem Statement

Problem: Current Threat Assessments Do Not Capture the Future Operational Environment We Will Encounter: Determined, Adaptive Enemies, Multiple Other Actors, Chaotic Conditions

Goal: Create a Compelling Narrative for the Future Operational Environment to Ensure Our Army…
Is Responsive to Our Combatant Commanders' and Nation's Requirements
Can Accomplish the Mission--Prevent, Shape, Win--in Any Operational Environment against a Wide Variety of Enemies and Adversaries

BLUF

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- ***Wide Spectrum of Potential Threats, Challenges, Contingencies***
  - Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan-Pakistan, Multiple Enduring Fault Lines in Middle East, Africa, Central Asia Will Remain Sources of Threats and Challenges
  - Managing the Relationship with China Only Part of the Problem…U.S. Will Continue To Be Needed as Balancer in Asia, Africa, Middle East
  - Transnational Terrorists, Insurgents, and Criminal Organizations Will Remain Common Features of the Strategic and Operational Environment
  - U.S. Remains Globally Powerful, but Freedom of Maneuver Has Narrowed… Greater Need for Support of Strong and Expanding Partnerships
- ***The U.S. Army Must Be Prepared to Operate in a Full Range of Complex Environments***
  - Many Crises Will Be Ambiguous…Threats to U.S. Interests May Only Be Clear after Situation Has Evolved and Deteriorated
  - If Our Shaping Operations Are Inadequate, U.S. Options May Be Limited

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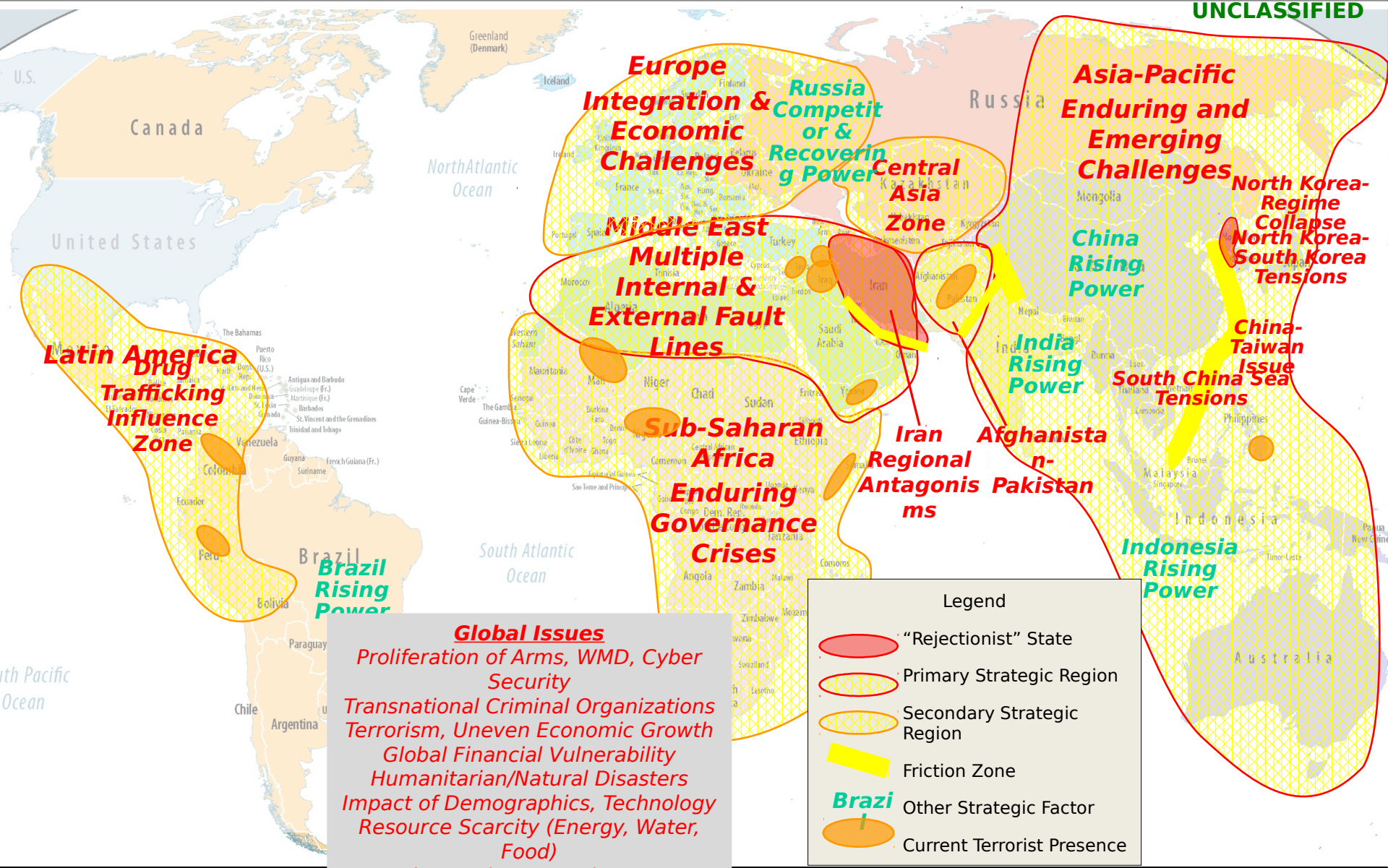
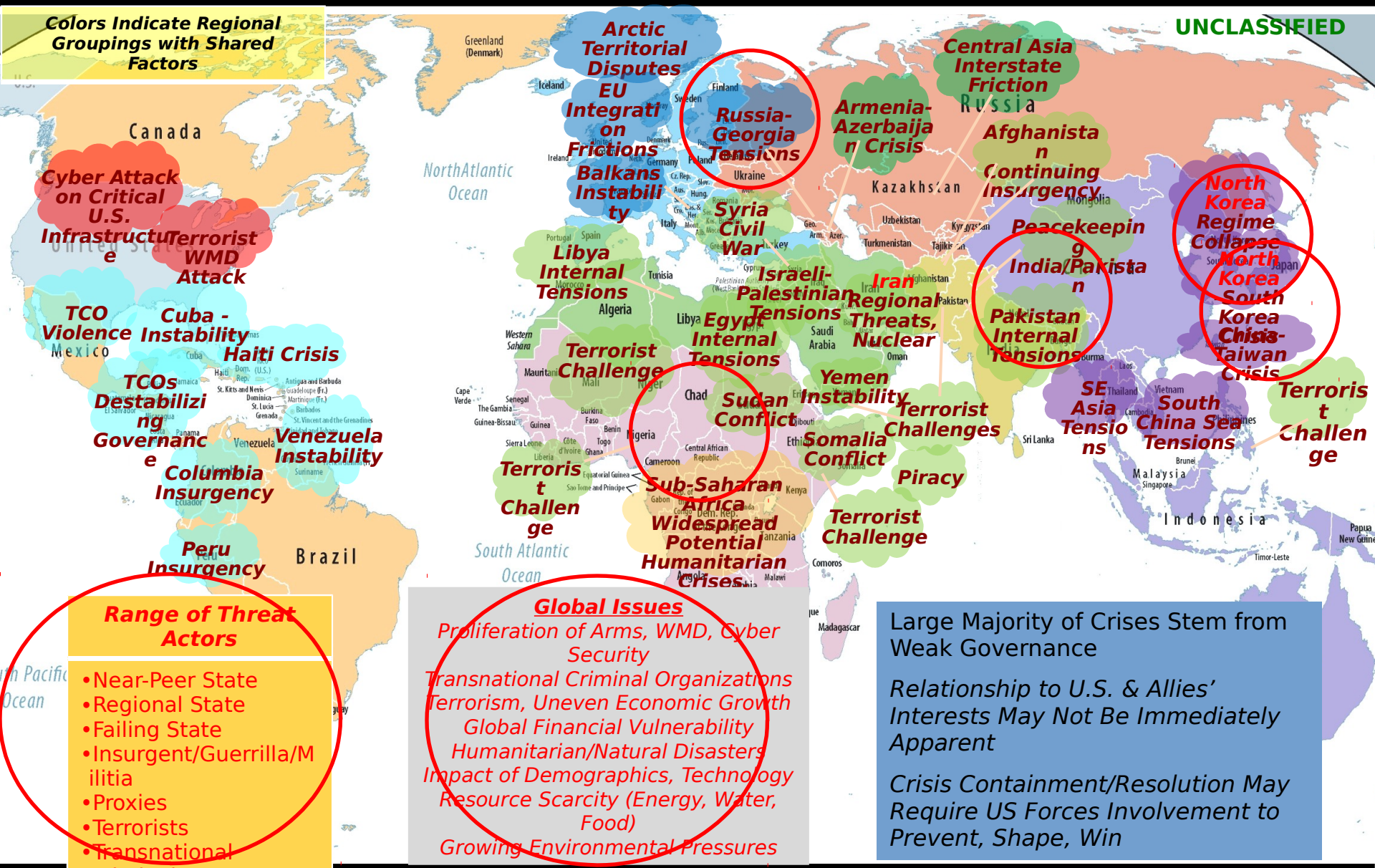
Evolving Global Landscape



Potential Crises to 2030



Range of Threat Actors

- Near-Peer State
- Regional State
- Failing State
- Insurgent/Guerrilla/Militia
- Proxies
- Terrorists
- Transnational Criminal Organizations

Global Issues

Proliferation of Arms, WMD, Cyber Security
Transnational Criminal Organizations
Terrorism, Uneven Economic Growth
Global Financial Vulnerability
Humanitarian/Natural Disasters
Impact of Demographics, Technology
Resource Scarcity (Energy, Water, Food)
Growing Environmental Pressures

Large Majority of Crises Stem from Weak Governance

Relationship to U.S. & Allies' Interests May Not Be Immediately Apparent

Crisis Containment/Resolution May Require US Forces Involvement to Prevent, Shape, Win

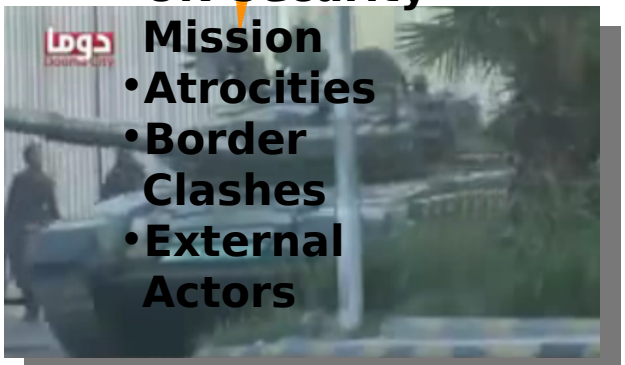
Many Crises Are Unfolding Now

Potential Linkages to U.S. Interests
Hypothetical Future Syria Example

The Spark
- Peaceful Popular Protests
- Government Responds with Repression

Syria in Crisis

Deteriorating Situation
- Armed Opposition
- Active Terrorism
- Continuous Military Operations
- Refugees & IDPs
- UN Security Mission
- Atrocities
- Border Clashes
- External Actors



Vital U.S. Interests*
- *Security & Stability of Allies, Partners*
- *Respect for Universal Values*
- *Promote Peace, Security, Opportunity*
- *Open International Economic System*

- Fractured Territorial Control
- Sectarian Militias
- Frequent Atrocities
- Growing Islamic Extremist Influence with Safe Haven
- Instability Spills Over to Neighbors
- Border Clashes with Neighbors
- Compromised CW Munitions
- Polarized Middle East, Global Alignments

*Prevent? *Shape? *Win?

*National Security Strategy, May 2010

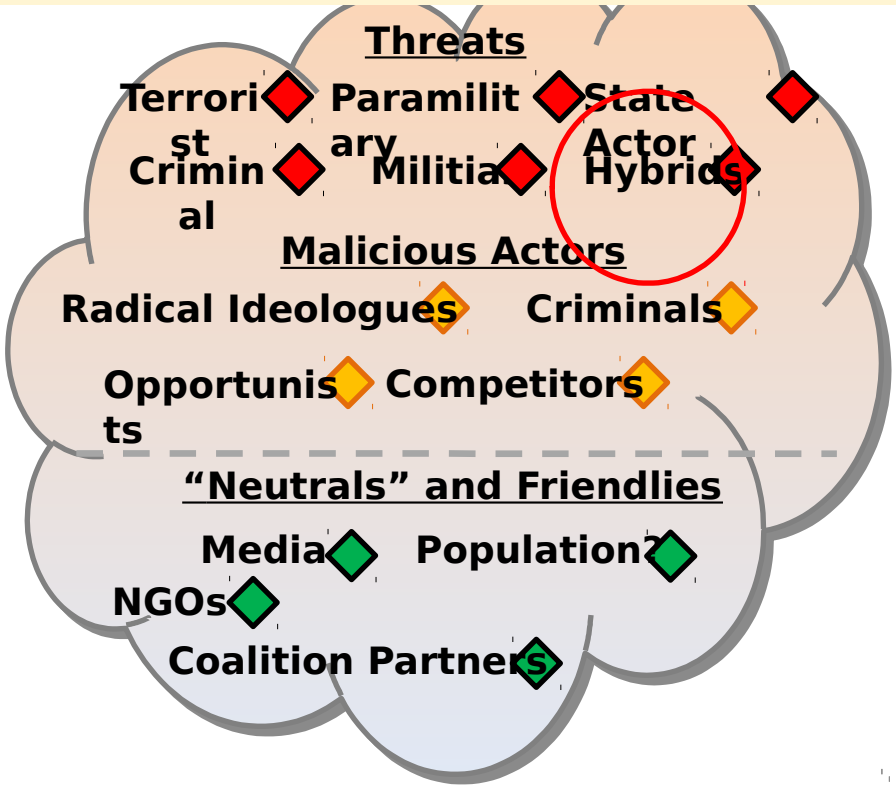
Our Operational Environment
Complex, Lethal, Volatile

Ends
- Wealth
- Resources
- Political authority
- Influence
- Sovereignty
- Identity
- Legitimacy

Ways
- Competition
- Cooperation
- Conflict

Means
- Attack the "will"
- Complexity – Chaotic Conditions – Anti-access
- Asymmetry

Essential Elements of the Complex Environment
- Multitude of Independent Actors
  - Threat, Malicious, and Neutral/Friendly Actors
- Technology Enables Effective Action – Violent and Nonviolent – and Rapid Adaptation
- Lack of Effective Governance or Rule of Law



Characteristics

Lethal
- Well Armed
- Technology Proliferates to Many
- Non-linear Relationship between Economic and Military Power

Persistent
- Victory Ill Defined
- Blurred Transitions, e.g. Conflict to Post Conflict.
- Unexpected Friction

Asymmetric
- Sidestep US Preferred "Way of War"
- Deny ISR & Strike Options
- Exploit Cyber
- Unforeseen Effects from Actions

The Global Operational Environment
Proposed Definition

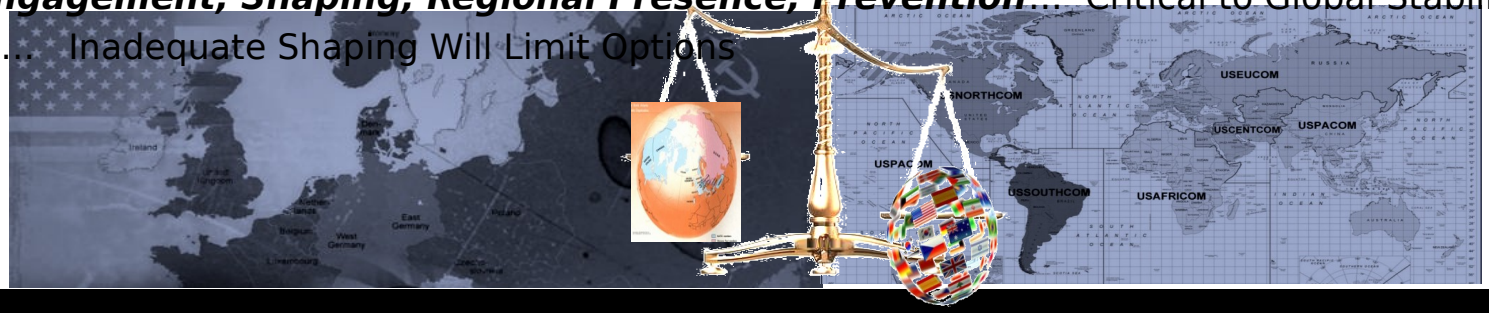
Essential Elements of the Complex Environment

- Multitude of Independent Actors
  - Threat
  - Malicious
  - Neutral/Friendly
- Technology Enabling Effective Action – Violent and Nonviolent – and Rapid Adaptation
- Fragile or Ineffective Governance

The global operational environment is complex, characterized by a multitude of actors presenting a wide range of possible threats under conditions of uncertainty and chaos. Adversaries' regular forces, irregulars, our coalition partners, criminals, refugees, NGOs and others intermingle in this environment and interact in many ways. Each of these actors may have an agenda, often at odds with our objectives, those of other actors, and those of the existing political order. Besides a broad range of readily available conventional weapons, threats and malign forces can select from an array of affordable technologies, adapting them to create unexpected and lethal weapons. Social media will enable even small groups to mobilize people and resources in ways that can quickly constrain or disrupt operations. This complex operating environment will continuously evolve as conditions change.

Evolving Global Power Balance and Implications

- ***We Are Confronted by a Wide Spectrum of Potential Threats, Challenges, Contingencies***
  - Range of Economic and Geopolitical Issues Contribute to a ***Highly Complex Security Environment*** -- Potential Crises are Not Hypothetical – but Unfolding Now
  - ***Iran, North Korea , Afghanistan-Pakistan, Multiple Enduring Fault Lines*** in Middle East, Africa, Central Asia Will Remain Sources of Threats and Challenges
  - Managing the Relationship With China – Only A Part of the Problem; U.S. Will Continue to be Needed as Balancer in Asia, Africa, Middle East
  - ***Transnational Terrorists, Insurgents, and Criminal Organizations Will Remain Common*** Features of the Strategic and Operational Environments
  - US Remains Globally Powerful, but Less So--Freedom of Maneuver Has Narrowed…Requires ***More Shaping in Concert with Strong and Expanding Partnerships***
- ***U.S. Army Must Be Prepared to Operate in a Full Range of Complex Environments***
  - Many Crises Will Be Ambiguous…Threats to Our Interests Only Clear after Situation Has Evolved
  - ***Early Engagement, Shaping, Regional Presence, Prevention*** … Critical to Global Stability, Security… Inadequate Shaping Will Limit Options



The Army's Challenge
Remaining Globally Engaged – Left of the Bang

"Our Army is the Nation's Force of Decisive Action, A Relevant and Highly Effective Force For a Wide Range of Missions."

"While We Cannot Predict the Future of Our Increasingly Uncertain and Complex Strategic Environment, We Can Be Certain that Our Nation Will Continue to Call on America's Army."

GEN Raymond T. Odierno

Can We Recognize Critical Fault Lines and Emerging Threats?
Are We Sufficiently Engaged to Defuse Conflict Before Crisis?
Are We Setting Conditions to Avoid the Fight?
Do We Value Deterrence?
Are We Structured for Phase 0-4 Employment?
Will We be Ready When Called?

The Future Is Here Today. What Should We Be Preparing for ?

Discussion